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Chair: Mr. Jürgenson ..... (Estonia)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 19: Sustainable development (*continued*) (A/72/75-E/2017/56, A/72/174, A/72/216, A/72/343, A/72/343/Corr.1 and A/72/353)

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(e) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (*continued*) (A/72/152 and A/72/152/Corr.1)

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(i) Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all (*continued*) (A/72/156 and A/72/160)

(j) Combating sand and dust storms (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Yii** (Singapore) said that the series of devastating natural disasters across the world in the past year had underscored the urgent need to fulfil the commitments made to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as well as other related agreements and outcomes, in order to protect the planet and build a more resilient and sustainable future. While every country had its own priorities and challenges, each one could learn a great deal from the experience of others.

2. Singapore had learned that Governments could formulate regulations on energy efficiency and companies could design products to meet those standards, but such actions would be fruitless if individuals continued with their wasteful habits. Hence, policies must act as incentives for individuals to take the right kinds of actions. In Singapore, for example, resources had been correctly priced and the use of smart meters was encouraged to avoid waste. The national vision and plans for sustainable development were outlined in the Sustainable Singapore Blueprint.

3. Integration and cooperation between the public and private sectors was crucial in Singapore for improving efficiencies and optimizing limited resources in order to achieve sustainable development. Singapore had used public-private partnerships for a variety of projects, including water treatment plants and waste disposal facilities. For instance, a new water reclamation plant was being co-located with an integrated waste management facility to harness synergies and allow both plants to be energy self-sufficient.

4. Small pilot experiments and projects could pave the way towards new solutions. NEWater, high-grade reclaimed water produced from treated used water, was a key pillar of the national water sustainability strategy. The first pilot plant had been built in 1974, but the technology at the time had been expensive and unreliable. However, the technology had become more affordable in the late 1990s and Singapore currently had five NEWater plants, which could meet up to 40 per cent of the nation's water needs.

5. Singapore looked forward to continuing to share its experiences with other countries, including during the presentation of its voluntary national review at the 2018 high-level political forum on sustainable development. On that occasion it also looked forward to in-depth reviews of Sustainable Development Goal 6, on clean water and sanitation, Goal 7, on affordable and clean energy, Goal 11, on sustainable cities and communities, Goal 12, on responsible consumption and production, Goal 15, on life on land, and Goal 17, on partnerships for the Goals.

6. **Mr. Momeni** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the Sustainable Development Goals could be achieved only if countries had adequate means of implementation. The United Nations should play a critical coordinating role in strengthening the global partnership for sustainable development and in enhancing cooperation and partnership at the regional and international levels. Over the next few months the

United Nations system, taking into account the different needs and priorities of developing countries, would need to align its work to support their achievement of the Goals.

7. The United Nations regional commissions played an important role in promoting the achievement of the Goals at the regional and subregional levels. Close cooperation among the commissions merited further exploration and his delegation supported innovative ideas that enhanced regional and subregional cooperation through the regional commissions.

8. The Islamic Republic of Iran attached great importance to achieving sustainable development at the national and regional levels. Sustainable development issues were among its national priorities, including enhancing public health. The overarching aim in that regard was to achieve universal health coverage in the country by 2025. Another major challenge was climate change, for which plans and programmes had been developed to move towards a low carbon economy. In particular, sand and dust storms posed a serious challenge to the sustainable development of affected countries, especially in Asia and Africa. The United Nations must urgently take appropriate steps to advance regional and international cooperation and provide effective support to address that issue.

9. Sustainable development and peace went hand in hand. As conflict and extremism in the world had increased in recent years, it was extremely important to find effective solutions to the challenges facing countries and regions, particularly the most pressing ones in the Middle East, in order for the Sustainable Development Goals to be achieved.

10. **Ms. Kharashun** (Belarus) said that sustainable development issues were a priority for Belarus, where consistent efforts were under way to raise public awareness about the 2030 Agenda. The National Coordinator for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, a post established by the President of Belarus, was in charge of the National Council for Sustainable Development, which provided a platform for intersectoral exchange and the discussion of progress. The National Coordinator had presented the voluntary national review of Belarus to the high-level political forum in July 2017 and had cited specific examples of the practical steps being taken to achieve the Goals. Belarus intended to make use of parliamentary hearings and national consultations with the participation of a broad range of partners, including civil society, as part of its process of implementing the 2030 Agenda.

11. Regional entities were an important connective link in global and national work on sustainable development. The United Nations regional commissions, particularly the Economic Commission for Europe, played a significant role in mobilizing political leadership and promoting partnerships.

12. Partnerships among national coordinators for achieving the Goals would help to optimize multilateral initiatives for sustainable development and also to counter related global threats and challenges. In that context, Belarus planned to host a 2018 regional forum for coordinators of the Goals in Central and Eastern European countries and in the Commonwealth of Independent States. The forum would provide the impetus for an international network to be established, under the auspices of the United Nations, of national coordinators for the Goals. Her delegation also proposed that the Department of Economic and Social Affairs should establish a United Nations database of national mechanisms for achieving the Goals, which would help to ensure effective cooperation among Member States in the future..

13. The United Nations system had an important role to play in establishing partnerships to harness the potential of States. In particular, increased international cooperation was needed to support the capacity-building efforts of middle-income countries. The Sustainable Development Goals would not be achieved without due attention to their special needs and interests.

14. The Technology Facilitation Mechanism was an important part of the new development agenda and Belarus stood ready to participate constructively in that process. The Mechanism must continue to be truly democratic, open to all interested countries and focused on the common good. In addition, particular attention within that framework should be paid to energy. Energy was intrinsically linked to climate change, economic growth, food security and all global challenges. It would be logical to consider establishing a comprehensive United Nations energy agenda that took into account the interests of all States, including in the areas of technology transfer and increased energy efficiency.

15. Belarus was interested in continuing its joint work with the intergovernmental organizations that comprised the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Chernobyl. Rehabilitation of the areas affected by the Chernobyl disaster must continue to occupy an important place on the international agenda.

16. **Mr. Kononuchenko** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation had noted the usefulness of the

recommendations prepared by the Joint Inspection Unit and contained in its comprehensive review of United Nations system support for small island developing States (A/72/119). In order to coordinate international cooperation for the implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (Samoa Pathway), it was important for the steering committee on partnerships for small island developing States and the global multi-stakeholder small island developing States partnership dialogue to continue their work. His delegation welcomed the use of interactive platforms to publicize information about the work of partnerships to implement the Samoa Pathway and also regarding the voluntary commitments entered into at the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

17. Natural disasters remained a serious threat to sustainable development. Climate change adaptation measures must continue to be developed and implemented, irrespective of the underlying causes. The Russian Federation was continuing to increase its assistance to island States, in accordance with the Samoa Pathway and the 2030 Agenda, and was partnering with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to finance the implementation of a project for regional disaster resilience in the Pacific small island developing States.

18. Increased efforts would be needed to reach the targets outlined in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, particularly by 2020. The main role in that regard should be played by national crisis centres and disaster risk reduction centres. The Russian Federation supported strengthening the network links among those centres and ensuring the operational exchange of information for a timely disaster response.

19. Efforts to combat climate change depended on verified scientific data and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was the main platform for the substantive consideration of climate related issues. The development of an action plan to implement the Paris Agreement was a priority objective.

20. The Russian Federation was preparing the legislative framework for the ratification of the Paris Agreement. It had also begun to develop a long-term low-greenhouse gas emission development strategy and a national climate change adaptation plan, among other efforts.

21. Within the framework of the Russia-UNDP Trust Fund for Development, a Climate Change Window had been established to finance projects that included enhancing energy efficiency in the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union, building capacities to fight forest fires in Armenia, increasing resilience to climate change in Tajikistan, and strengthening sustainable water resource planning and management in Santiago de Cuba.

22. In order to ensure common access to energy by 2030, it would be necessary both to enhance the effective use of traditional fuels and to increase the share of renewable sources of energy. Accordingly, Russia was carrying out measures to enhance energy efficiency and modernize the energy sector. Currently about 40 per cent of electricity in Russia was generated from non-carbon sources and its level of coal generation was one of the lowest among the major industrialized countries. By 2024, approximately 6 gigawatts of new capacity would be introduced from solar, wind and small hydroelectric stations. Particular attention was also being paid to the development of green projects in remote and isolated areas.

23. The President of the Russian Federation had declared 2017 the Year of the Environment. Russia currently had more than 12,000 protected areas, covering over 232.5 million hectares or 13 per cent of the country. It had significant experience of protecting biological diversity. Notable measures planned in 2017 and beyond included extending wildlife preserves, improving household waste management systems and conserving water and forest resources.

24. **Ms. Rodríguez Abascal** (Cuba) said that unacceptable levels of poverty, discrimination and social inequality persisted, even within industrialized nations, and the gap between North and South was widening. The planet's scarce natural resources continued to be used inefficiently and indiscriminately to maintain unsustainable patterns of production and consumption. Despite the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals, clearly insufficient progress had been made to date and there was still no sign of a fair and definitive solution to those ongoing problems. The Committee should at least discuss the root causes of that situation and how to build the political will necessary for the developed countries to live up to their historic commitments and responsibilities.

25. Sustainable development required greater common efforts, based on coherent and inclusive policies, a revitalized global partnership, the effective mobilization of financial resources and an enabling

environment at all levels. More capacity-building was also needed, including enhancing statistical capacities and promoting technology transfer to developing countries.

26. The United Nations system should prioritize poverty eradication as the greatest global challenge and as a prerequisite for sustainable development. To that end, its effective assistance to States should be increased to ensure the balanced and integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda so that no one was left behind. That maxim also meant recognizing and respecting the diverse approaches, visions, models and instruments decided upon by all countries while exercising their right to self-determination and in light of their different circumstances and national priorities.

27. A new record had been set for global average surface temperature in 2016, for the third year in a row, and the 2017 Atlantic hurricane season had been the most destructive one since 2005. It was clear that climate change posed a threat to sustainable development and to human survival. Cuba was committed to implementing the Paris Agreement and also urged the States parties thereto to work to fulfil their undertakings and to broaden its scope on the basis of common but differentiated responsibilities, while recognizing the vulnerabilities of the least developed countries, especially small island States.

28. **Ms. Shurbaji** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that two years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, exceptional geopolitical and economic circumstances were impeding many States' efforts to promote sustainable development. Although her Government continued to strive to promote development for the Syrian people, its efforts were being undermined by economic sanctions, the brutal terrorist war being waged against Syria, and the killings and other crimes perpetrated by the so-called international coalition against Syrian civilians and the country's infrastructure.

29. With the support of their allies, the Syrian armed forces were continuing their fight against terrorist groups, which were armed, financed and supported in other ways by certain States, despite those States' repeated assertions to the contrary. In order to promote development, all States must fulfil their obligations under Security Council resolutions on combating terrorism and must avoid double standards and selectivity.

30. Syria had adopted a people-centred approach in its efforts to foster sustainable development, and would continue to work with UNDP to that end. Her Government believed that creating opportunities, and not just providing assistance, was the key to the success of sustainable development strategies; it was also essential that the international community and the United Nations took into consideration the particular circumstances of individual countries when designing development initiatives.

31. The Sustainable Development Goals could not be achieved while States insisted on adopting politicized agendas, in contravention of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Syria urged the international community to provide unconditional support to its development initiatives, as well as to its emergency relief efforts. However, until the unilateral economic sanctions imposed on the Syrian people were lifted, it would be difficult to move beyond emergency relief initiatives designed to meet the urgent needs of the Syrian people and, instead, focus on fostering economic growth and rebuilding the country's infrastructure, education, healthcare and other sectors.

32. Turning to the report of the Secretary-General on the oil slick on Lebanese shores (A/72/353), she underscored that that oil slick was just one of many negative repercussions of the aggressive behaviour of Israel. The international community must ensure that the Israeli occupation authorities were held legally and morally responsible for their repeated violations of international law, including relevant United Nations resolutions.

33. **Ms. Picco** (Monaco) said that her country had always attached priority attention to the implementation of United Nations environmental conventions. Monaco was therefore particularly concerned by the lack of capacities to implement the Strategic Plan for Biological Diversity 2011–2020, especially in developing countries.

34. The Monaco Explorations Campaign was an example of an innovative project that prioritized cooperation with scientists and researchers, who were invited from all over the world to participate in targeted programmes on board the Yersin, a travelling research platform circumnavigating the globe for a period of three years.

35. Cognizant of the need to build the resilience of small island developing States, Monaco had been working for several years on a mangrove restoration project with Ole Siosiomaga Society Incorporated, a non-governmental organization based in Samoa. Owing to its long-standing commitment to marine protected areas, whose economic and social links to sustainable tourism were now recognized, Monaco had also been

working for many years with the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

36. In the context of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, Monaco had been promoting low-impact tourism, intermodal transport and a campaign to reduce marine waste, among other environmental protection measures.

37. The considerable progress made on disaster risk reduction since the adoption of the Sendai Framework was welcome. For its part, Monaco had set up a system that alerted the population to climate events, marine pollution and technological and seismic risks.

38. Monaco was a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and had ratified the Paris Agreement in 2016. Its contribution to the Climate Green Fund over the period 2016–2017 amounted to 26 euros per capita.

39. Having received the European Energy Award in 2014, Monaco now aimed to halve its greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, when compared with 1990 levels, and to reach carbon neutrality by 2050. Those new goals would require quadrupling the progress made to date and, to that end, the Mission for Energy Transition had published an energy transition white paper in March 2017.

40. **Mr. Rahmanto** (Indonesia) said that the global commitments made to achieve sustainable development would first of all require a revitalized global partnership in order to accelerate the implementation process, including through the use of science, technology and innovation.

41. Second, effective and sustainable technical assistance and capacity-building would be needed. In that regard, South-South and triangular cooperation could help to build a sense of national ownership and inclusivity as those cooperation programmes were attuned to national development priorities.

42. Third, maximum use should be made of the United Nations and its agencies as the drivers of sustainable development. At the global level, the high-level political forum and the General Assembly could serve as venues for cross-learning and problem-solving. Such multilateral forums provided opportunities to share best practices and experiences so that local stakeholders could shorten their learning curves.

43. Strong leadership would be needed to implement the various international commitments that had been agreed. For its part, Indonesia had been consistent in implementing sustainable development policies, including the Government's moratorium on new forest concessions and its renewable energy policy.

44. Lastly, he invited Member States to participate in a meeting of the Archipelagic and Island States Forum, to be held in 2018, where concrete actions would be put forward pertaining to such issues as climate change adaptation and mitigation and Sustainable Development Goal 14, on life below water.

45. **Ms. Ataeva** (Turkmenistan) said that the Sustainable Development Goals were a key area of strategic cooperation between Turkmenistan and the United Nations. In 2015, following comprehensive work with United Nations representatives, the Government of Turkmenistan had selected and approved 17 Goals, 148 targets and 193 indicators. A corresponding national implementation mechanism had been established, as well as a training and methodology centre for the Goals.

46. Her delegation would continue to actively assist in the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 69/213 and 70/197 on international transport and transit corridors. In November 2016, the Secretary-General had convened the first Global Sustainable Transport Conference, which had been hosted by Turkmenistan and had made a significant contribution towards implementing those resolutions. Turkmenistan had subsequently held informal consultations to discuss the draft resolution entitled "Strengthening the connection between all modes of transport to achieve Sustainable Development Goals", which had been submitted to the Second Committee for its consideration at the current session. She called on Member States to support the draft resolution, which would make transport safer and more reliable.

47. Turkmenistan would hold the chairmanship of the Energy Charter Conference in 2017. Within that framework, it would step up its efforts to develop a new international legal instrument on sustainable energy and would actively participate in creating the conditions necessary to diversify energy sources and energy supply routes.

48. As Turkmenistan currently held the chairmanship of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, it wished to hold a summit of Heads of State of its founding members in 2018 together with such specialized agencies as UNDP, the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia.

49. Turkmenistan supported the Paris Agreement and would continue to participate in international efforts

aimed at environmental protection, water resource management and the mitigation of natural and man-made disasters, among other measures.

50. **Ms. Nipomici** (Moldova) said that, despite impressive global commitments to implement the 2030 Agenda, the report of the Secretary-General on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (E/2017/66) clearly stated that advancements had been uneven across regions. His comprehensive review showed that much more needed to be done to eradicate poverty, eliminate hunger, ensure healthy lives for all, achieve gender equality, foster innovation and build sustainable and resilient infrastructure.

51. Owing to the complexity of the 2030 Agenda, greater use would need to be made of innovations and information technology. The multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals and the related Action Event on Innovations and Connectivity held earlier in 2017 had provided Member States with a good opportunity to share best practices and engage in substantive discussions with leading innovators and technology companies. In that regard, the United Nations should play an active role by further facilitating cooperation between Governments and the science, technology and innovation sector and by helping to replicate best practices in the use of innovations to support the Goals at the national level.

52. Enhanced international cooperation would be required to ensure that no one was left behind, including greater involvement of international financial institutions, the private sector and philanthropic organizations in securing the resources and building the capacities required to achieve the Goals. A good example for others to follow had been set at the 2017 Global Infrastructure Forum by multilateral development banks, which had agreed to encourage private sector investment in vital infrastructure and to support public-private partnerships.

53. A more accountable, transparent and results-oriented United Nations system was critical for building the capacities that Member States required, leveraging partnerships and fostering a whole-of-society approach in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In that regard, her delegation supported reform of the United Nations development system, as proposed by the Secretary-General. It also looked forward to his final report on that subject, which should contain concrete recommendations to improve collective support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

54. Women and girls were also crucial contributors to sustainable development. A greater focus on achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls therefore remained essential to ensure progress across all the Sustainable Development Goals and targets.

55. Moldova, with the support of its development partners, would shortly be issuing its national development strategy, called Moldova 2030. The strategy, which would be fully aligned with the Goals and other international commitments, would be a road map to implement an effective reform agenda for the benefit of all.

56. Her Government shared the concerns expressed by many Member States about the impact of climate change on efforts to achieve sustainable development. Moldova had submitted its nationally determined contribution in the context of the Paris Agreement in September 2015.

57. **Ms. Ochir** (Mongolia) said that, two years into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, active engagement of multiple stakeholders remained essential for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The critical role of the high-level political forum as the global platform for follow-up and review had been confirmed. The forum had firmly established itself as a space for considering challenges and structural barriers that required global coordinated action. In that context, her delegation reiterated the fundamental importance of financing for development, technology transfer, capacity-building and a revitalized and enhanced global partnership, as envisaged in the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development.

58. Her delegation welcomed the recommendations developed by the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, including on scaling up smart investment by Governments, the private sector and other partners to build productive and human capacity for science, technology and innovation to unlock creative potential. It also looked forward to the 2019 edition of the Global Sustainable Development Report, in which the science-policy interface would be strengthened to provide a strong evidence-based instrument to support policymakers in successfully implementing the 2030 Agenda.

59. The Mongolia Sustainable Development Vision 2030, adopted in February 2016, included such goals as ending all forms of poverty in the country, transforming Mongolia into an upper- middle-income country and promoting green development while building a strong and transparent governance system.

Those goals had also been mainstreamed into the Government's action plan for the period 2016–2020, the national action programme on climate change and other important policy documents. With a view to ensuring greater policy coherence, the Government was currently drafting a medium-term plan on the Sustainable Development Goals in which targets and indicators would be identified, development models designed and actions determined for cross-sectoral coordination and synergy.

60. As part of its follow-up to the Sendai Framework, the parliament of Mongolia had approved a number of policy documents on disaster risk reduction. Disaster risk management would be reformed by creating a legal environment for the establishment of national and local disaster risk reduction platforms, by clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of multiple stakeholders and by reinforcing the legal status for organizing emergency management. A range of national disaster risk reduction programmes and plans had also been adopted in 2015 and a draft medium-term national disaster risk reduction strategy had been developed in line with the four priorities for action contained in the Sendai Framework. Mongolia was expanding its cooperation on disaster risk reduction with both bilateral and multilateral partners. As the host of the 2018 Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, the Government of Mongolia, in conjunction with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, had co-organized the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction Asia Partnership meeting of 2017.

61. Voluntary national reviews at the high-level political forum provided an important platform for Member States to share their experiences of implementing the 2030 Agenda. It might be helpful to draw up a summary of best practice and lessons learned from the reviews.

62. **Mr. Dewar** (Mexico) said that sustainable development achievements, such as the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, had inspired renewed confidence in multilateralism. However, to build on the momentum created by those major agreements it was important to move from words to deeds. For its part, Mexico was making progress on implementation through specific actions that were fully aligned with those instruments and based on the premise of leaving no one behind.

63. The cross-cutting nature of the Sustainable Development Goals must transform the way in which public policies were designed and implemented. For example, economic development could not be achieved without an improvement in social conditions, and unless natural resources and ecosystem services were used sustainably.

64. As part of its commitment, Mexico had established a national council for the 2030 Agenda which transcended government administrations. That had been possible thanks to the active participation of the three branches of government as well as private enterprise, academia and international agencies. While Mexico had presented its voluntary national review to the high-level political forum in 2016, it had decided to present a second review in 2018 in order to share the progress made by its strategies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

65. Recognition of the environmental dimension of sustainable development had been one of the major innovations of the 2030 Agenda. Mexico agreed with the overwhelming majority of the international community regarding the need for continued implementation of the Paris Agreement. Environmental damage had a global impact with major socioeconomic consequences and progress must therefore be made on disaster risk reduction. A major step forward in that regard was the tool for measuring progress on the Sendai Framework indicators, adopted at the fifth session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Cancun, Mexico.

66. It was also important to prioritize biodiversity in the international agenda. As the Chair of the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, Mexico was concerned by the slow pace of progress made towards the achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets by 2020.

67. Lastly, Mexico welcomed the Global Pact for the Environment, an initiative proposed by France that could help to improve the mainstreaming of environmental issues into the 2030 Agenda.

68. **Mr. AlGhunaim** (Saudi Arabia) said that his Government was striving to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. To that end, and in line with the Saudi Vision 2030, the Government was taking action to ensure that every child enjoyed access to high-quality education. His country was also investing heavily in higher education and had opened several new universities in recent years. It was, moreover, striving to foster innovation and creativity while also ensuring that university curriculums and academic research were in line with the needs of the labour market and the country's priorities. Furthermore, in 2005, the Saudi Government had launched the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques

Foreign Scholarship Programme, which enabled Saudi students to study abroad at the world's foremost universities.

69. The Saudi Government and people acknowledged the importance of the 2030 Agenda, and the Sustainable Development Goals had been incorporated into the country's school and university curriculums. The Ministry of Education would make use of educational tools developed by the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization when making any further improvements to the country's academic curriculums and programmes.

70. **Mr. Gertze** (Namibia) said that, in implementing the 2030 Agenda to ensure that no one was left behind, developing countries faced many challenges, particularly from climate change. The highest political commitment was therefore needed from the international community to the Paris Agreement in order to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals for all, especially developing countries and small and vulnerable States. States parties to the Agreement that had not yet done so should deposit their instruments of ratification as soon as possible.

71. Africa was the continent most affected by desertification, land degradation and drought, which reduced land productivity and could lead to increased poverty, famine and migration, among other consequences. As those phenomena would adversely impact socioeconomic development gains, efforts to address them must be prioritized and implemented in line with the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda.

72. As droughts in Namibia had impacted the economy of Namibia and had negatively affected its development achievements, drought mitigation was a priority that had been incorporated in the Namib Declaration on a stronger United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification for a land degradation neutral world. Furthermore, in partnership with the African Union and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, Namibia had hosted the first ever Africa Drought Conference in August 2016. That event had resulted in the adoption of two major outputs: the Strategic Framework for Drought Management and Enhancing Resilience in Africa; and the Windoek Declaration for Enhancing Resilience to Droughts in Africa.

73. In addition to promoting sustainable land management and restoring degraded land in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, Namibia advocated for the development of a binding protocol on drought management under the auspices of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. It would therefore call for a decision of the parties to the Convention to set that process in motion.

74. In conclusion, his delegation welcomed the development of the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the establishment of the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund and the adoption of the Ordos Declaration at the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, held in September 2017 in Ordos, China.

75. **Mr. Al-Marri** (Qatar) said that, for the international community to achieve further progress in its implementation of the 2030 Agenda, it must forge stronger global partnerships and take into account the different priorities and needs of individual countries, especially the least developed countries.

76. His country was convinced that ensuring the provision of inclusive and equitable quality education, building capacities and promoting a culture of peace, tolerance and non-violence could accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Qatar was therefore according priority attention to enhancing educational programmes and ensuring that everyone, especially young people, enjoyed access to high-quality education and skills training. His country was developing and supporting innovative educational programmes and initiatives both within the country and abroad, including the Education Above All initiative, which aimed to uphold children's right to education in crisis- and conflict-stricken regions, and the Educate a Child initiative, which had provided high-quality primary education to millions of children worldwide. His country firmly rejected all attempts to politicize education and disrupt students' studies and he called on all States to uphold students' rights, in accordance with international instruments.

77. The promotion of sustainable development required the creation of safe, peaceful and inclusive societies. To that end, Qatar had played a leading role in establishing the Global Alliance for Reporting Progress on Promoting Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies. It was also crucial to address the challenges posed by climate change and promote the use of clean and renewable energy sources.

78. Sustainable development lay at the core of the Qatar National Vision 2030, which had established ke

social, economic and human development targets. Qatar had, moreover, integrated the 2030 Agenda in its national development strategy for the years 2017 to 2022. As a result of its successful programmes and policies to promote human development, Qatar ranked first in the Arab world on the UNDP human development index and thirty-third in the world.

79. **Ms. Cedano** (Dominican Republic) said that climate change posed an existential threat to communities, countries and cultures. Hurricanes Maria and Irma had recently caused lives to be lost in the Caribbean region and considerable damage to be inflicted on its infrastructure. Hurricane Nate had then caused flooding, landslides and large numbers of fatalities in several countries in Central America. Those events were a clear sign of the need to listen to nature and better understand the new kinds of challenges to international peace and security now facing the world.

80. Rising sea levels due to global warming had a direct impact on living conditions, causing population displacement, increased competition over resources and thus greater national and regional instability. Small island developing States were particularly affected and, unless urgent action was taken, much larger countries would also eventually be impacted, thereby jeopardizing international peace and security.

81. In a changing environment it was crucial not only to mainstream disaster risk reduction into development programmes but also to consider the effects and particular challenges of growing global urbanization. Furthermore, the security problems associated with climate change must be recognized in time to take swift, joint and decisive action.

82. The Committee should send a clear message of unity in supporting the joint action required for small island developing States to implement the 2030 Agenda and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

83. **Mr. Ngo** Gia Thuan (Viet Nam) said that one impact of climate change was an increased risk of natural disasters, as demonstrated most recently by three consecutive hurricanes in the Atlantic Ocean. While progress had been made in the two years since the implementation of the Sendai Framework, the international community required a coherent, integrated and collective response to natural disasters in line with the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement. His delegation therefore welcomed the efforts of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and the adoption of the Asia Regional Plan for Implementation of the Sendai Framework in November 2016.

84. Viet Nam had taken a number of proactive measures to address climate change, with invaluable support from various United Nations agencies. Such measures included accelerating public education and training on disaster risk reduction, supplementing the regulatory framework and national policies on disaster risk preparedness, and developing a national strategy on climate change.

85. His delegation wished to propose some ideas to reduce disaster risks in the coming years. First, as disaster risk reduction was critical for achieving the 2030 Agenda, it needed to be addressed more broadly in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals. Disaster risk reduction should also be incorporated into the strategic plans of United Nations entities. Second, while the United Nations system should continue to support the developing countries frequently affected by natural disasters, priority should be given to enhancing their resilience. Third, responsibilities for disaster risk reduction should be shared among both public and private stakeholders and it was critical to leverage partnerships across all sectors.

86. **Mr. Safah** (Iraq) said that education was the cornerstone of sustainable development and that, to achieve their Sustainable Development Goals, States required a skilled workforce to help build strong, peaceful and secure societies and promote economic and social stability. States must forge a global partnership to promote education and endeavour to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda by ensuring that sustainable development was addressed in school and university curriculums.

87. Iraq deeply appreciated the support of the General Assembly in its war against terrorist gangs belonging to Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and its support for the unity and territorial integrity of Iraq. His Government called on the international community to support its reconstruction efforts so that it could, inter alia, rebuild the country's education infrastructure in liberated areas.

88. A signatory to the Paris Agreement, Iraq had participated actively in the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in 2016 in Marrakech, Morocco. He called on developed States to fulfil their obligation under the Paris Agreement to help more vulnerable States address the effects of climate change.

89. Even in the face of the decline in economic growth brought about by the vicious assault on Iraq by ISIL, his country was seeking to reduce its carbon dioxide emissions, in line with its national priorities

and development plans. As it was, Iraq had been responsible for less than 0.2 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions between 1990 and 2011. Nonetheless, Iraq had adopted an ambitious plan to reduce its emissions by 14 per cent by the year 2035. It had been an early adopter of clean and renewable energy sources and environmentally-friendly carbon management regimes, and was striving to expand the country's green spaces. It was also planning to introduce petroleum gas for automobiles and convert some of its electricity generation plants into combined-cycle plants with a view to increasing their efficiency.

90. Addressing climate change would require a collective international effort based on the Paris Agreement and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Iraq urged the international community to provide it with the economic assistance it needed at that critical juncture in its history and underscored that the country's ongoing economic crisis, which stemmed from the fall in global oil prices, the extremely high cost of the war against ISIL and the cost of rebuilding heavily-damaged cities in liberated areas, meant that, without such assistance, the country would have few resources available to carry out its ambitious climate-related agenda.

91. **Mr. Mangisi** (Tonga), welcoming the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Follow-up to and implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States" (A/72/214), said that his delegation was heartened that the report reflected the successes achieved by several partnerships for small island development States. Nevertheless, a lack of adequate and sustainable means of implementation remained a common challenge for those States and compromised their ability to achieve all three dimensions of development.

92. As one of the countries most vulnerable to natural disasters, Tonga continued to attach high priority to mainstreaming strategies for mitigation and adaptation through such international agreements as the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework, and also through its own national strategy for building climate resilience. By 2030, for example, Tonga had committed to doubling its marine protected areas and to reducing its reliance on fossil fuel for power generation by 70 percent. Furthermore, in view of the importance of biodiversity to the livelihood and well-being of its people, Tonga was stepping up the implementation of its commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity and initiating voluntary efforts in the spirit of the recently held United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14.

93. Full and equal access to quality education at all levels also constituted a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development. The largest share of the national budget was therefore allocated to education, followed by health.

94. To further strengthen international and regional cooperation on sustainable energy, which was recognized as playing a critical role in the pursuit of sustainable development, Tonga had recently established the Pacific Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency. The Centre would support Pacific island countries and territories to advance their respective priorities and commitments for achieving sustainable energy.

95. Tonga was grateful for the assistance provided by UNDP in establishing a national monitoring mechanism for review and follow-up of the Samoa Pathway. It also recognized the vital role of the high-level political forum in monitoring and following up on the commitments made to small island developing States in the context of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The international community, including multilateral development banks, the United Nations system and other relevant stakeholders, should continue to provide small island developing States with the crucial support they required to address their specific vulnerabilities.

96. **Mr. Bilan** (Ukraine) said that Ukraine was fully committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, despite the current challenges to its stability and security from external aggression, and was continuing to work towards meeting targets in such areas as improving the quality of education, promoting gender equality and ensuring environmental sustainability. While defence expenses accounted for more than 5 per cent of the gross domestic product of Ukraine, his Government was implementing ambitious reform projects that included fighting corruption, promoting judicial reform, enhancing the investment climate and advancing decentralization.

97. Ukraine was also fully committed to its obligations under the Paris Agreement and, in that context, had been the first European country to deposit its instrument of ratification with the United Nations. There was no doubt that climate change mitigation was an essential component of sustainable development.

98. However, no country could achieve sustainable development without peace and security. His country knew first-hand the cost of conflict in daily life. He therefore wished to recall that, as universal goals, sustainable development and peaceful conflict resolution were inextricably linked.

99. **Ms. Loe** (Norway) said that achieving the Sustainable Development Goals would require macroeconomic issues to be included in the discussion of how to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development.

100. Climate change would affect populations across the world, as was clear from the recent hurricanes in the Caribbean, the extreme flooding in Asia and continuing fatal droughts in Africa. Both directly and indirectly, climate change was the great multiplier, aggravating poverty, damaging education, reducing health and food security and increasing the risk of conflicts and mass migration, particularly in fragile States. Without urgent action to combat it, climate change could undermine all other efforts for sustainable development. In that regard, prevention was important. The Sendai Framework provided clear targets and priorities for reducing disaster risk by 2030.

101. However, it would not be enough to address living conditions on land. The sound management and sustainable use of the oceans was another crucial part of the work needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, especially given the huge potential of the oceans for economic growth and human progress.

102. Clean and renewable energy was the dominant contributor to combating climate change, since it could simultaneously advance the global agenda on several fronts. More than 1 billion people still had no access to electricity, while more than 3 billion were forced to cook with polluting and inefficient fuels. Without rapid progress on Goal 7, on affordable and clean energy, it would be impossible to deliver on the other Goals.

103. A holistic and integrated approach was the key to making progress. National targets would only be reached by forging a true global partnership for development.

104. **Mr. Mohamed** (Maldives) said that his country's tradition of sustainability informed its approach to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Based on a broad set of priorities rooted in traditional practices, the Maldives had already taken steps to mainstream the Sustainable Development Goals into its national policy instruments, with a focus on gender empowerment, inclusive and equitable economic growth, sustainable consumption and building resilience at the national and local levels.

105. As reported in its voluntary national review at the 2017 high-level political forum, his Government had embarked on an ambitious transition to a low-carbon economy: by 2018, a target of 30 per cent had been set for national energy consumption from renewable sources. Furthermore, as Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States and in collaboration with the International Renewable Energy Agency, the Maldives had launched the Initiative for Renewable Island Energy and was currently hosting a meeting of energy ministers of small island States to support their transition to renewable energy and increased energy efficiency.

106. The recently held United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 had made a valuable contribution towards building the necessary political momentum. In that regard, his delegation welcomed both the call for action contained in General Assembly resolution 71/312 and the voluntary commitments that had emerged from the Conference. The Maldives had itself made nine such commitments.

107. For the Maldives, sustainable development was inherently linked to the oceans, which were the backbone of the country's tourism and fisheries industries. Sustainable, small-scale fisheries that employed traditional pole and line fishing contributed to poverty eradication, employment and decent work, while tourism, the country's largest industry, was often cited as a prime example of sustainable tourism.

108. However, despite its best intentions, the Maldives, like many other small island developing States, lacked sufficient technical and human capacity, particularly with regard to data collection analysis and the preparation of baseline data for the Sustainable Development Goal indicators. He therefore called for strengthened efforts from development partners with relevant expertise and encouraged coordinated efforts from the relevant United Nations agencies to boost the capacity of small island States.

109. **Mr. Chaves** (Timor-Leste) said that his Government aimed to make Timor-Leste a prosperous and strong upper-middle-income country through its strategic development plan for the period 2011–2030. As a country that had previously known conflict, Timor-Leste understood that development was impossible without peace and viewed peacebuilding, State-building and environmental protection as the foundations for sustainable development.

110. One of the major challenges the country faced, in addition to a series of deficits stemming from the lack of qualified human resources and its vulnerability to natural hazards and climate change, was its high dependence on oil revenues, which powered close to 90 per cent of its economy. Official development assistance to the country had dropped substantially since 2012, to approximately 5.8 per cent of its gross national income. That decline required the more cost-effective and strategic use of current revenues and a stronger, more diversified non-oil economy based on agriculture, tourism, manufacturing and other private sector enterprises. Steps were being taken towards more inclusive development, which meant decentralizing budgetary power to municipalities and expanding the reach of public services to support rural development programmes and job creation.

111. In order to reduce reliance on its petroleum fund and ensure fiscal sustainability, Timor-Leste was increasing the use of concessional borrowing to finance front-loaded infrastructure spending. The Government was also working to strengthen the rule of law in national legislation as a way of supporting the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development.

112. Education and gender parity had been prioritized through the implementation of a strategic education plan. Hence, by 2030, there would be a well-educated, knowledgeable and productive workforce able to participate in the country's economic, political and social development. The primary school completion rate had already increased to 83 per cent and the gender parity index to 99 per cent, which emphasized not only his Government's commitment to school attendance and completion but also to effective learning. In addition, more than 12,000 Timorese students were currently pursuing higher education studies overseas. Further initiatives had been undertaken in line with the 2030 Agenda, including a gender mainstreaming policy and several incentives to encourage women's participation in public life and decision-making, including a 33 per cent quota for political party lists and designated seats for women at the local government level.

113. The Government had recently drafted its national ocean policy and had made good progress on achieving all the voluntary commitments undertaken at the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14. It had identified tourism as a priority in its efforts to diversify the economy while also promoting sustainable development.

114. The first five years of the 2030 Agenda would be critical to its success. His delegation therefore supported the Secretary-General's proposal to revamp the United Nations development system with a view to achieving greater transparency, efficiency and effectiveness.

115. **Mr. Tamalgo** (Burkina Faso) said that the adoption of the 2030 Agenda had reaffirmed the international community's commitment to meet the sustainable development needs of both current and future generations. Burkina Faso had undertaken a number of initiatives aimed at incorporating the Sustainable Development Goals into its national economic and social development plans and policies. Signs of progress in key areas included an average economic growth rate of 5.5 per cent over the period 2006–2016; an average budget deficit of 3.7 for the same period; a sustainable level of public debt; improved human capital; the adoption of a law facilitating the conditions for public-private partnerships; and the implementation of a national environmental policy.

116. However, despite those gains, continued challenges included the promotion of sustained and inclusive forms of development designed to ensure a high level of productivity; universal access to education, health care and clean, affordable sources of energy; the sustainable management of water resources; the preservation and restoration of sustainable land-based ecosystems; and the establishment of planning tools and instruments to improve long-term land use.

117. The implementation of the National Social and Economic Development Plan would help to lay a solid foundation for sustainable development in the country by 2020. However, Burkina Faso would need the technical and financial support of all its development partners and other international actors in order to reform and streamline its institutional and administrative structures and optimize its human capital with a view to achieving truly inclusive development.

118. **Mr. Fox-Drummond Gough** (Brazil) said that the adoption of the global indicators framework was the culmination of five years of negotiations to establish a universal road map for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The participation of 44 countries in voluntary national reviews at the 2017 high-level political forum was further evidence of the international community's commitment to that Agenda. Indeed, more than two thirds of the United Nations membership had now showcased their domestic

strategies and policies for the achievement of sustainable development.

119. Nevertheless, to enhance the relevance of the Committee's efforts for the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals, its sustainable development work would need to be updated. For example, while Goal 12, on sustainable patterns of consumption and production, and Goal 6, on water and sanitation, were both crucial enablers of other Goals, neither was currently part of the Committee's annual resolutions. Those resolutions should also focus primarily on action-oriented language aimed at implementing sustainable development worldwide.

120. Brazil was open to analysing possible overlaps, provided adequate opportunities were afforded for a substantive discussion concerning all areas of the 2030 Agenda. However, the Committee's scarce resources should not be used to repeat or reinterpret previous agreements.

121. **Mr. Chinyonga** (Zambia) said that despite the progress made in reducing absolute poverty, three quarters of a billion people worldwide still lived in absolute poverty. Redressing that situation would require far-sighted decision-making at all levels, in particular for developing countries, which would need to mainstream the Sustainable Development Goals and targets into their national policies.

122. His own country had recently launched its seventh national development plan for the period 2017–2021. The plan's multisectoral approach, in line with both the 2030 Agenda and the African Union's Agenda 2063, aimed to create a diversified and resilient economy for sustained growth and socioeconomic transformation.

123. Commending the Secretary-General for his report on implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 (A/72/259), he noted that Zambia was vulnerable to a number of challenges such as drought, floods, pest infestations, hailstorms, landslides and epidemics that affected both humans and animals. His Government had made significant strides in developing an institutional framework for disaster risk prevention and reduction by aligning its national and subnational platforms with the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters. Zambia would continue that process through its planned domestication of the Sendai Framework.

124. While climate change spared no nation, developed or underdeveloped, it had the potential to undermine all efforts to raise living standards in poor countries. The upcoming twenty-third session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change must therefore establish mechanisms for implementation of the Paris Agreement. In addition to the transfer of appropriate technology, developing countries would require an adequately funded Green Climate Fund for assistance to enhance their adaptive capacities and successfully implement their nationally determined contributions.

125. His delegation welcomed the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification as a comprehensive global commitment to achieve land degradation neutrality. The Strategic Framework would help restore the productivity of vast areas of degraded land and reduce the impacts of drought on vulnerable populations.

126. Lastly, his Government had been intensifying its efforts to provide access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and renewable energy by undertaking several initiatives aimed at scaling up solar energy and accelerating private sector investments in small and medium-sized renewable energy projects.

127. **Mr. Gayito** (Ethiopia) said that Ethiopia, which had presented its voluntary national review at the 2017 high-level political forum, had been grateful for the opportunity to learn about the practices of other countries and stood ready to share its own experience with those preparing to present their reviews in 2018.

128. While the increasing impacts of climate change posed an existential threat to humanity, their consequences were disproportionately higher for vulnerable countries. However, Ethiopia had already integrated climate resilience and disaster risk reduction strategies into its national sustainable development plans, most recently by launching a 15-year national adaption plan focused on the most vulnerable sectors. The Government would redouble its efforts to mobilize both domestic and external funds to finance the project's $6 billion annual price tag.

129. Increased international support would be vital to ensure the success of national efforts to combat the adverse impacts of climate change and prevent and manage natural disasters. In that regard, Ethiopia was grateful to the Green Climate Fund for approving $45 million to support a project to build and strengthen gender-responsive resilience for the country's most vulnerable communities. Such support would encourage additional national endeavours to build a resilient, diversified economy and would increase the determination of Ethiopia to contribute to the

implementation of both the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework.

130. **Mr. Fandjinou** (Togo) said that implementation of the 2030 Agenda was one of the most urgent priorities facing the international community, in view of the commonly accepted definition of sustainable development as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The Sustainable Development Goals now provided a framework for dismantling the silos that had hitherto prevented the integration of the three development pillars. The reform process currently under way within the United Nations would contribute to the achievement of the Goals, in particular the eradication of poverty, the fight against climate change and the creation of peaceful, inclusive societies.

131. As part of its efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, Togo had undertaken a process of institutional reform for their integration into its national development strategies and policies. One example was a campaign aimed at accelerated growth and employment opportunities for the period 2013–2017, with a focus on bringing essential services such as potable water, quality education, health care and job training, especially for youth, to grass roots communities. A national inclusive finance fund had also been created to offer favourable credit to youth, farmers and other vulnerable sectors of the population as a path out of poverty.

132. As one of the pilot countries involved in the rollout of the Goals, Togo had not only had the honour of presenting its voluntary national review at the high-level political forums in both 2016 and 2017, but would do so again when the forum reconvened in 2018.

133. Urging the international community to increase its cooperation, he called on development partners to prioritize their assistance to the world's most vulnerable populations and to embark without delay on bold programmes that would eliminate extreme poverty.

134. **Mr. Dzonzi** (Malawi) said that climate change was real and that its consequences were indiscriminate and required immediate action. El Niño and La Niña events in the region had already adversely impacted the economy of Malawi and other countries, adversely affecting their agricultural production and causing serious harm to their agro-industries.

135. His Government was in the process of developing a new strategy for growth and development that would incorporate key targets in the areas of disaster risk reduction and resilience, based on the Sendai Framework. There was also an urgent need for national and regional early warning systems, as well as accurate and accessible data. The importance of international cooperation and partnerships for building lasting resilience and ensuring an adequate response to the threat posed by climate change could not be overstated.

136. The long-term impact of climate change on migration, health, livelihoods and housing had the potential to derail plans for development and to hinder progress that would uplift those furthest behind. For that reason, new development strategies should be inclusive. Malawi was committed to including women, girls, children people with disabilities and all members of local communities in the decision-making process.

137. **Ms. Elgarf** (Egypt) said that her country had made significant progress in its efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda and, to that end, had adopted the Egypt Vision 2030 sustainable development strategy. The results of the 2017 national census would, moreover, facilitate the country's efforts to promote sustainable development, in line with its national priorities. Egypt would submit its second voluntary national review to the high-level political forum in 2018.

138. In 2018, Egypt would host the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which would help to consolidate global efforts to safeguard biodiversity and raise awareness of the importance of protecting the environment. Egypt also underscored the importance of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Addressing climate change would require a collective international effort based on the Paris Agreement and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

139. She urged the international community to support efforts to combat and mitigate the effects of desertification and land degradation, particularly in Africa, and to implement all provisions of the Convention to Combat Desertification. The international community should also promote the use of clean and renewable energy, as well as the transfer of innovative energy technologies to developing countries, as that would help them achieve their sustainable development objectives.

140. States must enhance their education systems, which could play a critical role in supporting their sustainable development initiatives, so that everyone, including refugees, internally displaced persons and people living in difficult humanitarian circumstances, enjoyed access to high-quality education. Action was

also needed to combat poverty, strengthen the resilience of States and enhance the capacity, particularly of small island developing States, to predict and respond to natural disasters and emergencies.

141. She called on States to forge strong global partnerships and to earmark sufficient and predicable financial resources to support developing countries' efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and promote prosperity.

142. **Mr. Abuzed** (Libya) said that translating the commitments contained in the 2030 Agenda into reality required a coordinated response by States to the world's development challenges. Libya underscored the right of all peoples to development and called on States to incorporate the three dimensions of sustainable development into their national plans on the basis of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. To achieve sustainable development and eradicate poverty, it was crucial that States focused, in particular, on reducing unemployment and providing high-quality health and educational services to their populations.

143. He urged the international community to support efforts by Libya and other affected countries to combat desertification and land degradation, and to implement all provisions of the Convention to Combat Desertification. States in Africa were particularly in need of capacity-building assistance so that they could more effectively respond to and mitigate the impact of natural disasters. It was, moreover, crucial that the international community redoubled its efforts to resolve the world's numerous armed conflicts, which continued to undermine peace, stability and development in many countries. In that connection, he urged friendly States to support the Libyan Government's efforts to rebuild the country's national institutions and restore security and stability.

144. Capital flight from developing countries to both developed countries and safe havens was also slowing down the pace of development. It was time for States to implement the United Nations Convention against Corruption and create mechanisms for the retrieval of plundered assets, which, in the case of Libya, would provide a valuable source of financing for reconstruction and sustainable development initiatives.

145. **Mr. Abdullah** (Nigeria) recalled that it had been two years since the international community had adopted the 2030 Agenda. Citing the advice of the late boxer Mohammed Ali to make the days count rather than count the days, he wondered whether the Committee was indeed making its days count in its efforts to achieve sustainable development. He also wondered what would make the Sustainable Development Goals different from the Millennium Development Goals, since the latter were as ambitious as the former, both were aimed at poverty eradication and improving human well-being, and both also recognized the particular needs of Africa as the world's poorest region.

146. If the slow pace of implementation of the 2030 Agenda continued, Africa was unlikely to meet its targets. For its part, Nigeria was committed to the full implementation of the Agenda, as demonstrated by the presentation of its voluntary national review at the 2017 high-level political forum. However, the international community needed to step up its efforts and mobilize more resources in partnership with African countries.

147. With roughly half of the world's 800 million people living in extreme poverty and lacking access to safe drinking water or basic sanitation, Africa faced major challenges on its path to sustainable development. For the continent to achieve even a modicum of success in providing primary and secondary education, promoting gender equity and reducing maternal mortality, novel approaches would be needed, particularly with respect to governance and combating corruption.

148. Illicit financial flows from the continent were estimated to have caused the loss of more than $1 trillion over the past 50 years, the equivalent of all official development assistance received during the same time frame. With accurate accounting almost impossible to establish due to a lack of data and transparency, especially in view of the prevalence of bribery and trafficking in persons, firearms and drugs, current estimated losses of $50 billion annually were likely understated. The cooperation of the international community in combating illicit financial flows was therefore urgently needed. It was imperative to combat the cross-border flow of corrupt and criminal assets via such means as tax evasion, transfer and trade mispricing, the abuse of public office, trafficking and illegal mining. The international community must hold the facilitators and intermediaries of illicit financial flows to account and take the necessary steps to strengthen asset recovery and return as an integral part of helping Africa to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

149. The United Nations must assist in developing a global partnership for sustainable development in Africa that included the establishment of an open, rules-based, non-discriminatory trading and financial

system. In that context, the special needs of the least developed countries must be taken into consideration and the benefits of new technologies should be made more accessible and affordable to them.

150. Similarly, cooperation would be needed to help his country and other African nations confront the challenges of climate change. Although Nigeria had implemented national strategies for early warning and disaster risk reduction in line with the Sendai Framework, most developing countries did not have the means or capacities to effectively adapt to climate change and mitigate its impact. It was therefore crucial for developed countries to fulfil their commitment to collectively contribute $100 billion per year to the Green Climate Fund by 2020. Nigeria was particularly interested in the forthcoming deliberations on the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative, which sought to address desertification and drought in the border towns of northwest and northeast Nigeria.

151. **Mr. Ramírez Carreño** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that while the 2030 Agenda unquestionably covered a broader scope than any previous sustainable development agreements, it had clearly incorporated many well-known concepts. However, inclusive, sustainable and transformative development would still require political will, especially from developed countries. Poverty eradication strategies that respected the right of States to self-determination would also be needed as permanent sovereignty of States over their own resources was a fundamental factor in promoting socioeconomic development.

152. The decline in oil prices had caused certain macroeconomic imbalances due to the drop in export revenues from crude, a situation compounded by recent coercive measures imposed by the United States with the aim of strangling the Venezuelan economy. Despite such obstacles, however, the Government remained fully committed to advancing citizens' well-being within the parameters of the 2030 Agenda. It had allocated 73 per cent of the national development budget to policies of social inclusion that prioritized solidarity, justice, equity, the promotion of human rights and civic participation.

153. Climate change was a critical issue that disproportionately affected developing nations. As a developing country with a highly diverse geographical profile, Venezuela attached great importance to the Paris Agreement. In that context, the developed countries should strengthen their commitment to provide new, increased and predictable financial resources.

154. Lastly, in order to establish a new development model based on equity, sovereign equality, shared interests, collaboration and solidarity among nations, steps must be taken to transform the economic functioning of the global system, reverse the injustice and irrationality of the market and substantially change the international financial and trade institutions.

155. **Mr. Parajuli** (Nepal) said that Nepal, which had presented its national strategies and policies for sustainable development at the 2017 high-level political forum, had resolutely aligned its national development plans with the Sustainable Development Goals and targets.

156. Climate change had not only aggravated existing problems but had also raised the cost of development for all groups of countries in special situations. As a landlocked least developing country, Nepal faced specific challenges in implementing the 2030 Agenda. His delegation therefore urged stakeholders to consider ways to harness complementarities and linkages among the Goals, including for island and mountain nations. Nepal had itself advanced the idea of developing a matrix for tracking progress and reflecting such linkages in order to enhance the efficiency of existing follow-up and review mechanisms.

157. In the context of disaster risk reduction, an enhanced partnership was needed to build resilience and capacity. To that end, the Sendai Framework must be effectively implemented in a balanced manner in conjunction with the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020, the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 and the Samoa Pathway, as appropriate.

158. Highlighting the importance of clean and renewable energy, he said that Nepal was eager to make use of the country's vast hydroelectric potential for the benefit of the entire South Asian region.

159. **Ms. Eddaou** (Morocco) said that the 2030 Agenda embodied a collective commitment to eradicate poverty, famine and malnutrition by sharing the benefits of multilateral trade with the developing world, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States. Stakeholders across the board had identified the primary challenges as reducing climate change, combating desertification, preserving biodiversity and improving disaster risk preparedness. In that context, Morocco was actively engaged in the promotion of renewable energy, green agriculture and sustainable tourism, and would support all efforts aimed at implementing the Paris Agreement.

160. Through a process of broad multi-stakeholder consultations involving the private sector and civil society, Morocco had adopted a national sustainable development strategy that was intended as a tool to lead the country towards an inclusive green economy.

161. The Kingdom of Morocco had demonstrated its commitment to achieving sustainable development by mobilizing an unprecedented number of private sector participants at the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Marrakesh in November 2016. In that regard, and in conjunction with the General Confederation of Moroccan Enterprises, the Kingdom had initiated a private sector climate strategy aimed at strengthening capacities through human capital. Along similar lines, the country's strategies for economic and social reforms included the goal of increasing renewable energy production to 52 per cent of total electricity generated by the year 2030.

162. Sustainable tourism was also a major development goal for his country. The Government had established a programme entitled Vision 2020 that aimed to make Morocco one of the world's top 20 travel destinations by 2020, which would entail the creation of 470,000 new jobs in the national tourism industry.

163. In the overall context of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, Morocco would continue to promote policies that actively supported those countries most vulnerable to global warming, particularly African countries and small island developing States.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.